CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A system for distributing and activating an RFID Transponder at a point of purchase, the system comprising:

an RTDA apparatus having a storage for a plurality of Transponders, a plurality of Transponders in the storage, each Transponder having a unique ID code, at least one electronic data reader, and network access to a processor system; and

an RTDA application having customer data verification, electronic data and account data verification across the network at the processor, an interface to the RTDA apparatus to control dispensing of Transponders, and receiving an account verification code and an activation confirmation code from the processor;

whereby the RTDA reads customer electronic account data, verifies same and verifies the account is valid, dispenses a Transponder to a customer, reads the Transponder ID code, and associates the Transponder ID code with the customer's electronic account data in a unique customer record in an RFID database, and receives an account activation confirmation code and displays confirmation of activation to the customer.

2. The system of claim 1, further comprising a component selected from the list of components consisting of webcam or the like, printer, LCD touchscreen, and barcode reader.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the storage for Transponders is further comprised of a plurality of dispensers, each dispenser dispensing a different kind of Transponder.

4. An RTDA apparatus for distributing and activating an RFID Transponder at a point of purchase, the apparatus comprising: a storage for a plurality of

Transponders, a plurality of Transponders dispensable in the storage, each Transponder having a unique ID code, network access to a processor system, a MICR reader, a credit/debit card reader, a bar code reader, an RFID reader, a touchscreen input device, and a dispenser controller, at least one of the readers operable to read customer financial account data for sending across the network to the processor system, the RFID reader operable to read the unique Transponder code for sending across the network to the processor system, such that the dispenser controller effects secure dispensing of a Transponder upon a verification from the processor.

5. A method of securely dispensing an RFID Transponder at a point of purchase for use by a customer, the RFID Transponder having a unique ID code readable at the point of purchase, the method comprising the following steps:

reading at the point of purchase and uploading customer selected electronic account data through a network to a processor;

processor validation of the account data and sending back to the point of purchase a validation code and a record locator code;

reading the validation code and selectably dispensing a Transponder to the customer if the code matches preselected criteria for dispensing;

reading the dispensed Transponder ID code at the point of purchase and uploading it and the record locator code through the network to the processor;

processor activation of the Transponder ID by association of the Transponder ID with the customer selected electronic account in a processor database record such that the customer account may be dynamically charged whenever the unique Transponder ID is associated with the customer database record for payment, the timing of activation being selected from the list of activation timings consisting of immediate, batched, and held for point of purchase cashier verification of customer ID.

6. The method of claim 5 further comprising, after the activation step, the step of the processor sending an activation confirmation code back to the point of purchase such that the customer is immediately advised as to the status of activation, based on the confirmation code.

7. The method of claim 5 further comprising, after the activation step, the step of the customer logging in to the processor from the point of purchase to perform maintenance on the customer record at the processor database.

8. The method of claim 7 wherein the step of performing maintenance on the customer record is selected from the list of steps consisting of modifying the account, linking an additional transponder to the account, replacing a lost transponder, assigning the Transponder to a different customer financial account, updating the Transponder, and cancelling a Transponder.

9. The method of claim 5, wherein the selected timing of activation is immediate.

10. The method of claim 5, wherein the selected timing of activation is that activation is held for point of purchase cashier verification of customer ID, and further comprising the following steps after association of the Transponder ID with the customer selected electronic account in the processor database record:

customer is instructed to verify her own personal identification with the cashier;

cashier so verifies;

Transponder ID code is read again, either by a reader that is controlled by the cashier, and/or by any reader, but with the cashier inputting a store code to confirm his verification of the customer ID, and the Transponder ID and the store code if any are sent to the processor;

such that the customer account may be immediately dynamically charged.

11. The method of claim 10 wherein the Transponder ID code is read again and the cashier inputs a store code to confirm his verification of the customer ID, and the Transponder ID and the store code are sent to the processor.

12. The method of claim 5 further wherein the step of processor validation of the account data and sending back to the point of purchase a validation code and a record locator code also includes queuing of the customer database record for later activation upon receiving a valid Transponder ID.

13. The method of claim 5 further wherein the step of reading the validation code and selectably dispensing a Transponder to the customer includes acceptance by the customer of a displayed terms of use prior to the Transponder being dispensed.